95. (Amended) The method of performing ophthalmic surgery according to claim 91, wherein:

[said pulsing ultraviolet laser beam provides an energy level of no greater than 10 mJ per pulse to said corneal tissue] said substantially overlapping pattern is achieved using a randomized scanning of said pulsing laser beam on said corneal tissue.

A12

96. (Amended) The method of performing ophthalmic surgery according to claim 91, wherein:

said pulsing ultraviolet laser beam [provides an energy level of no greater than 20 mJ per pulse to said corneal tissue] has a wavelength of 193 nm.

100. (Amended) A method for performing photocoagulation on a corneal surface according to claim [100] 99, wherein:

A13

said infrared laser beam is emitted by a diode laser having a wavelength in a range of 1.9 to 2.5μm.

Kindly add the following new claims 105 and 106.

------ 105. (New) The method for performing corneal refractive surgery according to claim 90, wherein:

said scanning mechanism comprises a galvanometer.

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106. (New) The method for performing corneal refractive surgery according to claim 90, further comprising:

aligning a center of said scanning laser beam onto said corneal surface with a visible aiming beam.-----

Remarks

By this amendment, claims 24-36, 39-45, 48-50, 56, 59, 61, 62, 69, 70, 76-79, 82, 84, 86, 90, 91, 92, 95, 96 and 100 are amended, and new claims 105 and 106 are added. Thus, claims 1-106 are currently pending in the present application.

Although the Applicant is under no obligation to respond to the public protest filed by a third party on March 18, 1999, the following comments on the references cited by the protest are offered merely to help the Examiner in determining the relevancy and/or multiplicity of these references.

Reference 1: US Patent 4,718,418 to L'Esperance, Jr.

This '418 patent is specifically cited in the '679 Lin patent as a reference that was already considered by the Examiner during the original prosecution of the Lin patent. The reference generally teaches the use of a high energy laser having an output energy of 200 mJ/pulse (See Col. 3, line 59 to Col. 4, line 20). In contrast, current claims of the present application recite a laser having **low** output energy. For example, claims 1, 25, 39, 48, 71, 76, 82, 90 and 91 recite a laser having an output energy level of **no greater than 10 mJ/pulse from an output coupler of the laser**.

Reference 2: US Patent 4,665,913 to L'Esperance, Jr.

This reference is a parent application of reference 1 ('418 patent) above. The '913 patent essentially contains the same disclosure as the '418 patent, and likewise fails to disclose, teach or suggest, *inter alia*, the claimed **low** energy, high repetition rate laser of the present application. (See Col. 3, line 53 to Col. 4, line 14).

Reference 3: US Patent 4,838,679 to Bille

The '679 patent to Bille discloses an apparatus and method for "examining eyes". According to Bille, "gentle examinations" of human eyes are performed by illuminating the eyes with a broad laser beam, and a beam reflected from the eyes is detected with a photo-detector. The examination is to be performed "by utilizing UV-radiation of comparatively high intensity without inconveniencing a person subjected to examination." The UV laser beam of Bille is for illumination purpose, and thus does not reach photoablation threshold (PAT) level. Moreover, Bille fails to disclose, teach, or suggest ophthalmic surgery, photoablation or photocoagulation, much less using a low power, high repetition rate laser as variously claimed by the present application.

Reference 4; European Patent Application No. 0296982A1 by Hanna

Hanna discloses reshaping of an object, e.g., a cornea, by laser ablation. According to Hanna, a laser beam is directed to the object through a lobe shaped narrow slit that can be rotated between discrete ablations.

Hanna uses a diaphragm/aperture mechanism, and is NOT a scanned laser as is the present invention. Hanna teaches the use of a **high** energy **180 mJ/pulse** laser (See page 5, lines 53-57). Hanna fails to disclose, teach or suggest a laser having a **low** output energy, i.e., **no greater than 10 mJ/pulse** as variously claimed by the present application.

References 5, 6 and 7: Ren et al., "Corneal Refractive Surgery Using An Ultra-violet (213 nm) Solid State Laser, "SPIE Vol. 1423 Ophthalmic Technologies (1991), Ren et al., "Ablation of the Cornea and Synthetic Polymers Using a UV (213 nm) Solid-State Laser," IEEE Journal of Quantum Electronics, Vol. 26 (December 1990), and Gailitis et al., "Solid State Ultraviolet (213 nm)Ablation of the Cornea and Synthetic Collagen Lenticules," Lasers in Surgery and Medicine 11:556-562 (1991).

Reference 5, 6 and 7, all reporting the same laser system, disclose the use of a **high** power laser having an **output energy level of 40 mJ per pulse**, operated at a low repetition rate of 10 Hz, and having an infrared wavelength (1064 nm) at an output coupler (See Fig. 2 of reference 5 and Fig. 1 of references 6 and 7). The high power infrared 1064 nm laser output is attenuated using harmonic generation crystals to ultimately provide an ultraviolet laser beam (213 nm). In contrast, all current claims of the present application recite a **low** power laser having an output energy level of **no greater than 10 mJ/pulse**. Moreover, some claims recite a high repetition rate ablation (enabled by the low power laser) of, for example, at least 50 Hz.

Reference 8: J.T.Lin, "A Multiwavelength Solid State Laser for Ophthalmic Applications," SPIE Vol. 1644 Ophthalmic Technologies (1992).

This reference, by the present inventor, is not prior art to the present application. The present application is a re-issue application of US patent 5,520,679, which issued from a continuation-in-part application No. 07/985,617 that was filed on December 3, 1992. Reference 8 was published in January of 1992, less than one year before the earliest filing date (December 3, 1992) of the present application.

Proper support for all present claims including the ablation rate range is found in the parent '617 application filed on December 3, 1992.

Furthermore, even if Reference 8 were to be construed as prior art against the present application, it nevertheless still fails to disclose, teach or suggest, e.g., the recited laser having an output energy level **no greater than 10 mJ/pulse**. Instead, Reference 8 teaches the operation of laser beam converted from the output of a Nd:YAG laser having an infrared wavelength (1064 nm), and a high energy level of about 40 mJ/pulse from an output coupler. Reference 8 fails to disclose, teach or suggest, *inter alia*, a laser having an output energy level **no greater than 10 mJ/pulse** as variously claimed by the present application.

References 9 and 10: L'Esperance, "Ophthalmic Lasers," Chapter 24 Corneal Laser Surgery, The C.V. Mosby Co., St. Louis (1989). and L'Esperance, "Ophthalmic Lasers," Chapter 26: New Laser Systems, Their potential Clinical Usefulness, and Investigating Laser Procedures", The C.V. Mosby Co., St. Louis (1989).

References 9 and 10 teach the use of a gas excimer laser having a **high** output energy level of **100 mJ/pulse**, or an ArF laser having a **high** output energy level of **200 mJ/pulse** (e.g., see Reference 9, page 926).

Neither Reference 9 or Reference 10 discloses, teaches or suggests a laser having a **low** output energy level of less than **10 mJ/pulse** and/or high repetition rate enabled by such a low power laser, as variously recited.

Early and favorable examination on the merits of the present application is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

William H. Bollman
Reg. No. 36,457

Farkas & Manelli PLLC
2000 M Street, N.W.
Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20036-3307
202-261-1020